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THE PRUSSIAN CAMPAIGN OF 1758¹

II.

THE repeated disasters of the French arms were no surprise to Cardinal Bernis. With the low opinion which he held of Richelieu and the other generals nothing else could be expected by him, but if their repeated failures vindicated his own claims as a prophet, they multiplied his cares as a minister. Hence he began very early in the year, before Crefeld, even before the retreat over the Rhine, to agitate for peace. In long letters to Count Stainville and Kaunitz he set forth the dark aspect of affairs; urged the hopelessness of all plans for wresting territory from the king of Prussia; suggested the mediation of Holland, Spain and Denmark; and while protesting his perfect loyalty to the treaty or treaties of Versailles, insisted that the next campaign ought to have no other object than an honorable peace. As an honorable peace he was willing to regard one which exacted no other sacrifice from Frederic than the restitution of Saxony and Mecklenburg.² Some of the grounds for his depression were the danger of the colonies, the state of the finances, the unpopularity of the war, the unfitness of the generals, the difficulty of getting the Netherlands and the apparent invincibility of the king of Prussia. But Bernis was not systematic or consistent even in his efforts for peace. He professed in general to speak only for himself, held a different language to Stahremberg and discredited his own cause by the peevish and unmanly tone of his letters. Hence the court of Vienna, while consenting to a reduction of the annual subsidy due from France, insisted resolutely on the prosecution of the war. Louis XV. and Madame de Pompadour were not less firm. The new treaty between England and Prussia was an open challenge to the other side, and the confidence even of Bernis seemed for a time to be revived by the failure of Frederic at Olmütz and the vigorous measures taken by Belleisle to restore the credit of the French arms.

Early in the year it had been arranged that the army of Soubise should be dispatched to Bohemia. But in consequence of Cler-

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² To Stainville 14 January, 7 April; to Kaunitz 17 March 1758. Schaefer, II. i. 525-527, *Einige neue Actenstücke*, 54 seq., *Mém. de Bernis*, II. 43 seq., 413, 418, etc. The influence of Austria had lately procured Bernis the cardinal's hat.

mont's retreat behind the Rhine the plan was given up by mutual consent¹; and on the advice of Belleisle the corps was ordered to return to Hesse, where it could again live at the cost of the enemy, and make a useful diversion in favor of Clermont. When the news of the battle of Crefeld reached Paris orders were sent to hasten its departure. It set out therefore from Hanau, where it had been reorganized and strengthened, on the 9th of July, and two weeks later occupied Cassel. The few battalions of Hessian troops, mostly militia, were unable, though they made one gallant fight near Sondershausen, to hold the field against twenty-five thousand; the landgrave became again a fugitive; and the French settled themselves securely in the defenceless country. This alone was embarrassing to Ferdinand, but at the same time the enemy before him began also to act. Clermont had just turned over the command to the Marquis of Contades, the senior lieutenant-general, a tried soldier of excellent character, but unendowed with genius and destitute of friends at court. The army had been reinforced, and the new commander promptly took the offensive. His movements were conducted with considerable skill. He offered battle once and declined it once; but having the advantage of numbers tried to get between Ferdinand and the Rhine, and sent out detachments to destroy the bridges. If he failed in these ends, he accomplished his main purpose; the allied army was steadily forced back; and it was even reckoned to the credit of Ferdinand that he was able to extricate himself from the net spread by the enemy and recross the Rhine near Emmerich without serious loss. The crossing was completed on the 10th of August. The garrison of Düsseldorf also escaped. The prince next fell back to Coesfeld, between the Rhine and the Ems, where the English auxiliary force joined him, and where he proposed to make a stand for the defence of Westphalia. But Contades also crossed the Rhine a week later, was himself reinforced by a corps of eight thousand Saxons, and pushed on to complete the work.² The situation was critical for Ferdinand; and the Hanoverian ministers, already alarmed by the forays from Soubise's army, were now thrown into a panic.

Even more sinister was the news which came from the east. Since the fall of Königsberg half a year had elapsed; and although the Russians had not been very active, they had also not been idle. The occupation of Preussen completed, they next took possession of the line of the Vistula from Thorn to Elbing; in complete indiffer-

¹See Arneth, V. 383.

²G. S., II. 134-135, estimates Ferdinand's strength, after the arrival of the English contingent, at 50,000; that of Contades at 75,000; and that of Soubise at 25,000.

ence to Polish neutrality the space between the Vistula and the Warta was next traversed; and while the main army made its leisurely marches, the Cossacks and other light troops shot out into Pomerania in search of plunder and adventure. It was now the month of July. The natural sluggishness of such an unwieldy army with its imperfect organization and inadequate trains, the timidity or indolence of Fermor himself, the difficulty of finding supplies in so thinly peopled a country as Poland, and controversies about the eventual line of operations to adopt—all these explain without excusing the extreme procrastination of the Russians.¹ But they had as yet no resistance from an enemy. The only available Prussian force, the army of Pomerania, now under the command of Lieutenant-General Dohna, though it raised the siege of Stralsund when Fermor crossed the Vistula, and releasing the Swedes, turned against the more dangerous foe, numbered less than twenty thousand men, and was too weak for open battle, or for any service except disputing the passage of the Oder, and checking the forays of the Cossacks. Accordingly, Fermor crossed the Warta, as he had crossed the Vistula, unopposed; and early in August re-entered Prussian territory near Meseritz. This movement seemed to indicate a plan to pass the Oder near the city of Frankfort, and then perhaps to reach out a hand to the Austrians. Dohna hurried up the stream to offer such resistance as he could. But Fermor changed his course; re-crossed the Warta; and along the right bank of that river moved directly upon the fortified city of Cüstrin, the chief obstacle that stood between him and the capital of the Prussian kingdom.

This town lies on an island formed by the river Oder and the two arms into which the Warta divides shortly before its junction with the Oder. The works, which entirely enclosed it, though antiquated in style, were still of considerable strength, and able to delay if not to thwart the designs of an enemy. A bridge connected the city with the left or west bank of the Oder, where there was a considerable suburb. The only approach to the fortress from the east was along a narrow causeway built through swamps and morasses, and of course easy to defend in case of an attempted assault. But an assault did not enter into the Russian plans. When on the fifteenth of August Fermor's army came within sight of the city, the few Prussian troops posted in and about the suburbs hastily retired behind the walls of the fortress; whereupon the

¹ A detailed and seemingly accurate journal of Fermor's movements is in Tielcke's *Beiträge zur Kriegskunst*, Vol. II. The author, a Saxon officer, served with the Russians.

enemy being without heavy guns which could hurt the works themselves, began a fierce and indiscriminate cannonade with their field pieces, soon set fire to the unhappy town, and destroyed it almost to the last house. There was little or no loss of life. The inhabitants fled across the Oder with what they could hurriedly save from the flames; but the smoking ruins of Cüstrin told a bitter story, which the Prussian soldiers and the Prussian people long remembered. In the course of the following days the Russians made considerable progress toward the works themselves, which were uninjured. Trenches were opened and batteries were placed as advantageously as possible; while lower down the river preparations were made for throwing a bridge across, in case it should be deemed advisable to push on to Berlin before the siege was concluded. Dohna, who had promptly returned from Frankfort, had his little force judiciously disposed on the opposite side of the stream. In the irregular wooded country east and north of the ruined town, on a line several miles long, lay the Russian host, ill-fed, ill-disciplined, impatient for action, and overwhelming in numbers, an enemy whose cruelties excited in the households of Prussia the wildest feelings of horror and alarm.

This was the situation when Frederic came to the rescue. After the retreat from Olmütz he had remained about two weeks in the neighborhood of Königgrätz, ready and even anxious for a battle if it could be had on reasonable terms, yet compelled to choose his positions with the utmost care lest he be taken at a disadvantage. Daun pursued his usual tactics with his usual skill. In the course of the intricate manœuvres Frederic managed to send his trains and heavy guns and wounded back to Silesia in charge of General Fouqué; and early in August he followed with the rest of the army, reaching Landshut on the ninth. Two days later he set out with fourteen thousand men for the Oder. His original plan was to join forces with Dohna at Crossen, and to give battle to the Russians in that neighborhood, toward which it was supposed they were advancing; orders were issued, money was spent, and time was lost in consequence of this error, which was excusable. But on the way it was learned that Fermor had turned to besiege Cüstrin, and Frederic could only follow Dohna down the river to the real point of danger. On the twenty-second of August, after a march of one hundred and fifty miles in eleven days, the weary troops reached Golgast, a village two or three miles west of Cüstrin. Frederic himself with a small escort had arrived the day before.

The course of action which he now adopted was marked by even more than his usual audacity, and is perhaps explained by the con-

temptuous opinion which he had of the Russians as soldiers. According to his delusion Fermor's army was little more than a horde of nomads, who would fly before the first onset of civilized troops. He seems to have been impatient with Dohna and with the commandant of Cüstrin, and to have treated them with rudeness, because they had not acted on the same assumption and thrown caution to the winds. It is stated that Keith, who had served with the Russians, warned Frederic not to underrate their fighting powers.¹ Lloyd had a very high opinion of their infantry, which he held to be superior to any other in Europe.² This was an exaggeration, for the Russian soldiers were deficient in intelligence and in dash or *élan*; yet it was a pardonable exaggeration, since even in 1758 they were known for a certain iron tenacity, a certain fatalistic desperation, which in great crises made them the most obstinate of enemies. But all this Frederic refused to believe. His chief concern was lest the Muscovites should escape; and accordingly he adopted tactics designed to make their retreat difficult in case they should lose the day, hoping thus to annihilate as well as to defeat them. Instead of marching through Cüstrin, therefore, and attacking them directly in front, he proposed to get into their rear, or at least between them and their natural line of retreat, before offering battle. This involved a very wide detour and the construction of a temporary bridge over the Oder. Güstebiese, a point some fifteen miles down the river, was chosen for the crossing; the march of the troops began in the night of the twenty-second; the pontoons were easily laid the next morning; and without any interruption from Fermor, who refused to believe the reports of his own scouts,³ the little army safely passed over to the right bank of the stream. The following day at noon the march was resumed, the general direction being southeast. One might say that this completed the second quarter of the great circle which the Prussians were describing about the enemy. Along the whole route travelled by the army since crossing the Oder stories were heard of the ravages of the Cossacks. Peasants came into camp crying to the king for protection. Even the stern heart of Frederic was touched with pity by these sufferings, but with this was mixed a feeling of horror and indignation toward the authors of them; so that while he consoled the victims with friendly words, he also assured them that relief and revenge were near. Toward evening of the twenty-fourth the army reached the little river Mietzel, a tributary of the Oder, where with the right

¹ See Varnhagen von Ense, *Ausgew. Schriften*, XIII. 141.

² Lloyd, I. 145, 146.

³ See Masslowski, II. 153. This is contrary to the usual version, which makes the Russians entirely ignorant of Frederic's movements.

resting on Darmietzel it passed the night. The next day the battle was expected. At nine o'clock of that anxious night, while the tired soldiers were sleeping beneath the August sky, and the sentries were vigilantly pacing their rounds, Frederic threw off his many cares, turned quietly to letters, and composed an imitation or variation of one of the most exquisite odes of J. B. Rousseau.¹

In the meantime Fermor had changed his own position to suit the supposed designs of Frederic. Suspecting that the passage of the Oder would be attempted at Schaumburg, he formed his army in order of battle between the village of Zorndorf and the Mietzel, with its right resting on that stream and the front towards the west, that is, toward the quarter whence the enemy was expected. But Frederic's march on the opposite side of the Mietzel had carried him completely around Fermor's right and to a point practically in his rear some distance higher up the stream. His plan now included a further movement in the same direction. Before daybreak the next morning the foot crossed the Mietzel at Neu Damstadt mill, and burning the bridges behind them, proceeded in two columns to complete the third quarter of the circle, the course being south and west or toward Cüstrin; while the cavalry, passing the stream still higher up, and thus making a still wider detour, tended toward the same quarter. About eight o'clock the several divisions came together at the edge of the great wood through which they had marched; were skillfully fused into two columns; and then pursued their way westward to the open ground between the Warta and the Mietzel. As formed for action the Prussian army had its right on the village of Wilkersdorf, and the line stretched thence westward behind Zorndorf to the Drewitz forest on the left. It faced nearly due north. The tactical advantage of this position was that the Russians would have no line of escape if defeated, for the Mietzel was impassable without bridges, and these had been destroyed, while the route toward Landsberg, on the Warta, would be barred by the victorious army of Frederic; the latter, however, could fall back upon Cüstrin in case of disaster. As soon as Fermor discovered the enemy across the Mietzel he completely reversed his order of battle, so that what was his rear became his front, advancing at the same time somewhat toward the east; but when Frederic's march continued, and his purpose became clearer, the Russian commander again adjusted his position until he had a line looking directly south. The Mietzel was in his rear. The army

¹ Deux strophes de l'ode de J.-B. Rousseau au comte de Sinzendorff, corrigées la veille de la bataille de Zorndorf, 24 August 1758, 9 p. m. *Œuvres de Frédéric*, XIV. 175. Voltaire's ridicule of these stanzas perhaps suggested this ambitious attempt at "correction."

was posted on irregular ground, considerably elevated in places and protected by an extensive morass, the Zuberngrund, on the right. Colonel Masslowski proves conclusively that the famous *carrée* or hollow square, on which so much ingenious reasoning has been spent, gave way before the battle to the ordinary formation in a first and second line.¹ The effective fighting force was about 42,000 men.² There was a deficiency in cavalry, for the best mounted regiments had been sent on an expedition down the Oder, and were cut off from their comrades by Frederic's movement. But in artillery the Russians were very strong. On the other side the conditions were reversed; the Prussians had comparatively few guns, though those which they had were of superior quality, but they had an abundance of cavalry, including some of the most famous regiments of the army. Their total strength was probably about 32,000 men.

The battle which ensued is described in a few words by saying that Frederic's oblique method of attack was this time less successful; that some of the Prussian infantry behaved badly, and that the army was saved from destruction by the regiments of horse which at two great crises Seydlitz opportunely led against the enemy. It was nine o'clock when the action began with a heavy cannonade, the Prussian guns being massed on the left, whence their fire was very effective. Under cover of this, and preceded or accompanied by a battery or two, the vanguard under Manteuffel filed around the burning village of Zorndorf, which the Cossacks had set in flames, and advanced toward Fermor's extreme right, which the king had chosen for attack.³ The vanguard was to be followed by the infantry of the first line of the Prussian left, which was commanded by General Kanitz. Next was to come the second line, and thus successively, forming and moving *en échelon*, the active columns were to fall upon the Russian right; roll it up as the Austrians had been rolled up at Leuthen; then to turn upon the centre and destroy or force the surrender of an army which in the hour of defeat would have no chance of escape. But Kanitz was either tardy in his movements, or swayed too far toward the right, the result being a dangerous gap between his columns and the vanguard. The Russians saw their advantage. They promptly threw forward the few squadrons of horse stationed on their right, which with wild cries of exultation plunged into the ranks of the ill-formed Prussians. The foot of the first line followed this example, and the second line ad-

¹ II. 166.

² Ibid., II. 156, 157.

³ On the wisdom of this choice there has been some controversy. Cf. G. S., II. 264; Tielcke, *Beiträge*, II. 147 n., etc.

vanced in support. The vanguard was overwhelmed and broken up by the shock ; the battalions hurried forward by Kanitz were repulsed ; twenty-three guns were lost ; and the Russians still pressed onward toward Zorndorf. But their impetuosity proved their ruin. Far around on the extreme left of Frederic's original line sat General Seydlitz with thirty-one squadrons of horse. He watched the progress of the enthusiastic Russians without dismay, for he saw them getting farther and farther from their supports and losing discipline in their mad eagerness. He chose his own time, ignoring it is said even the repeated orders of the king, and when the time came he let loose his troopers, who successfully passed the Zaberngrund, a deep hollow full of obstructions, and fell with terrific force upon the flank of the enemy. Some of the Russian infantry regiments made a good resistance and fought even when falling back. Others showed less steadfastness, and when Seydlitz was reinforced by fifteen more squadrons drawn from the right a panic ensued in the enemy's ranks. They fled to their camp half crazed with fatigue, alarm and thirst ; gorged themselves with brandy from the commissary wagons ; and almost unresisting were sabred down by hundreds. At length, and after the greatest efforts, their officers got the survivors behind an impassable morass, the Galgengrund. The pursuit came to an end. Seydlitz retired behind Zorndorf with his gallant riders, and by noon the battle on this part of the field was over. The enemy's right was nearly destroyed, but his left was still intact, while Frederic saw the infantry of his left broken in ranks and spirits, and his plan of battle ruined.

The king now turned his attention to the other extremity of the Russian line, the left. This was formed by the separate corps known as the corps or army of observation, which under the independent command of Count Browne had only just arrived from Russia, and numbered about 10,000 men. During the engagement of the forenoon Fermor, who was not only the commander-in-chief, but in the division of work had special charge of the right wing, was absent from the field, and left his subordinates to carry on the fight without that unity of action which comes from the direction of a single will.¹ But Browne was a man of different stamp. When Frederic took up the fight in his part of the field, and sent out a battery to cannonade his ranks, Browne ordered forward his cuirassiers, who charged the Prussian right, broke up two regiments of foot of the first line, and penetrated even to the second line, when they were arrested by the fire of heavy guns and a counter-charge of cavalry, and retired to their old position. There they were

¹ Masslowski, II. 174, 175.

reorganized, and, supported by Browne's infantry, again charged the enemy. At first they swept everything before them. As on the left, Frederic's infantry acted badly, could not be kept up to its work, and in some cases refused to obey its officers. Then Seydlitz came again to the rescue. Having collected sixty-one squadrons of horse he charged the eager columns of Browne as he had earlier charged those of Fermor, and with nearly the same degree of success. But the struggle was more desperate. The Russians fought like fanatics; and though they were driven back, the battle degenerated into a hand-to-hand fight between individuals, in which the fiercest passions were displayed on both sides, and scenes of almost incredible ferocity occurred. Browne's military chest was captured, and he himself received a dozen wounds. Toward nightfall, however, the Russians succeeded in rallying a few regiments near the village of Quartschen, which put a check to the further progress of Seydlitz.¹ The cavalry, worn out by its terrible labors and unable to make headway in the swampy ground, fell back to give room for the final attack by infantry, which Frederic ordered about seven o'clock. The attacking force consisted of battalions from both the right and the left. General Forcade bravely renewed the fight with the column which he commanded, without, however, shaking the obstinate firmness of the Russian regiments which Demiku had drawn together. But the rest of the Prussian foot under Rauther again quailed, and could not be brought to face the enemy. With this lame conclusion the day of carnage came to an end.

In the disorder and uncertainty concerning details of this battle it would be hopeless to expect accuracy in the figures of losses. The Prussian staff history puts that of the Russians in killed, wounded and prisoners, including officers and men, at about 21,000; that of Frederic at not much over half as many. It adds that the Prussians took 103 cannon and 27 flags, the Russians 26 cannon.² Frederic also had the pleasure of receiving several of the enemy's generals as prisoners of war, and of consigning them to dungeons in the fortress of Cüstrin, because, he told them, all of the houses of the city, which might have afforded them more comfortable quarters, had been destroyed by their orders. Darkness and general exhaustion having put an end to the battle, which had lasted for nine hours, the armies took position for the night. The Prussians slept on their arms behind or just west of the village of Zicher, on which Browne's extreme left had originally leaned, and Wilkersdorf, which

¹ This is insisted on by Masslowski, II. 178, and seems to be confirmed in the brief and not very clear "Relation de la bataille de Zorndorf" of Frederic himself. *Pol. Cor.*, XVII. 191. Cf. Schottmüller, *Die Schlacht bei Zorndorf*, p. 62.

² G. S., II. 257. Masslowski, II. 187, reduces the Russian losses to 16,000.

had been the right extremity of their own battle order ; the Russians, in front of Quartschen and thence toward the Zabergrund. Each army was thus in a position at right angles to that of the morning ; but as the Russians occupied the most hotly contested portion of the field, they had a certain pretext for claiming the victory. The next morning at daybreak Fermor withdrew behind the Zabergrund, which was a protection to his front, while the Drewitz wood was at his back ; reorganized his shattered regiments ; formed again for battle, and awaited the enemy. Frederic moved toward him, and an artillery duel was engaged across the Zabergrund. But beyond this and a few cavalry skirmishes nothing took place. All through this day, the twenty-sixth of August, the two armies watched each other, both weary, both short of ammunition ; the Russians willing to get away without further bloodshed, and Frederic now willing to let them get away. Accordingly early the following morning Fermor got his army under way, and without any interference from the Prussians moved on the arc of a large circle, between them and Cüstrin, to Klein-Camin. Here his heavy baggage, forming an immense wagon train, had been sent several days before, and fortunately had been overlooked by the enemy. At Klein-Camin the army was again drawn up for battle, though its line of retreat was now open. But neither party was more eager to fight than the day before. Frederic shifted his position to Tamsel, near Cüstrin, and allowed Fermor to choose his course. Thus during these few days the two armies had swung completely around each other like partners in a dance ; had fought the bloodiest battle of the war ; and had apparently gained nothing, each side calling itself the victor.

Yet although the battle was drawn, the campaign was decisive. Cüstrin was saved, and the Electorate was for the present spared an invasion by such rude enemies. The Russian army was not destroyed, but its fighting spirit, or that of its commander, was gone ; and after two days at Klein-Camin, it fell back to Landsberg on the Warta, where it remained inactive through the month of September. But for Frederic and his men there was no rest. As was foreseen, the enemies whom he left behind on his departure for Cüstrin hastened to take advantage of his absence, and Prince Henry's situation became critical. The army of the Empire under the Prince of Zweibrücken had been reinforced by Austrian troops until its numbers reached upwards of forty thousand, and early in August it invaded Saxony at several points.¹ It was impossible for Prince

¹ Some estimates put the numbers as high as 50,000 ; Prince Henry modestly said 38,000. To Frederic, 30 August, 1758. Schöning, I, 252, 253.

Henry to defend so long a frontier with only twenty thousand men. But he manœuvred obstinately and skilfully for time ; kept his little force distributed in chains or groups of well-selected posts, from which they could not easily be dislodged but could quickly be concentrated ; expanded or contracted his line according to need ; and showed himself alert, vigilant, self-possessed. The superior numbers of the enemy only succeeded in forcing him back from one strong position to another, and he showed his teeth viciously even when falling back. Not being able to defend all of Saxony, he had to choose what he would defend to the last. Frederic had repeatedly enjoined him not to allow himself in any circumstances to be drawn away from the Elbe ; and by the nineteenth of August the prince had his forces pulled together more compactly about Gross-Sedlitz, above Dresden. Pirna and the fortress of Sonnenstein were held by him. Soon afterwards the enemy also concentrated on the Elbe. Zweibrücken took up his headquarters at Struppen above Pirna, and a number of bridges thrown across the stream gave ready communication with the right bank. In this situation the two armies faced each other for more than a week. The prince blocked Zweibrücken's road to Dresden indeed ; but the eventual outcome of the affair seemed to depend, for both alike, on the plans and movements of the army under Daun.

This officer had won much glory by the bloodless relief of Olmütz, and Belleisle regretted that he could not command on the Rhine at the same time as in Moravia.¹ Even greater things were now expected of him. While his own skilful measures had thwarted one enterprise of Frederic, and Fermor's invasion of the New Mark called him away for another, the Austrian Fabius seemed to have a splendid chance for his favorite policy of carrying on war without fighting. The empress-queen thought a battle might be risked if the marshal should happen to run upon an enemy in the course of his next movements—an audacious conclusion which she supported in a long letter with arguments drawn from the history of Austria and the state of all Europe ; it was a characteristic appeal to this master of seventy thousand veteran soldiers.² But on one point general and sovereign were agreed. Daun's plan of moving first into the Lower Lausitz and getting there a base for future operations, instead of following Frederic into Silesia, bristling as it did with strong fortresses, found warm approval at Vienna, and was adopted. After the relief of Olmütz, General Deville had been sent with a small force into Upper Silesia to invest Neisse. General

¹ To Stahremberg, 9 July 1758. Arneth, V. 385.

² 27 July 1758. Arneth, V. 394-401.

Harsch was now detached in like manner to watch the frontier between Bohemia and Silesia. With the main army Daun then entered Lausitz; reached Zittau the seventeenth of August, where a magazine of supplies was begun; and three days later was at Görlitz. From here he had the choice between three courses of action. He could try an invasion of Silesia, which was protected only by the inferior force of Margrave Charles and Zieten; or co-operate with Zweibrücken in an attempt on Dresden; or push on northward into Upper Lausitz, and possibly toward Berlin, as a more effective diversion for the Russians. It was no part of his plan to have Fermor give or accept battle. He wrote the Russian general a letter warning against such a hazard, but it fell into Frederic's hands, and was ironically answered in Fermor's name after Zorndorf. What Daun preferred was a game of shuttlecock, with Frederic madly flying back and forth between two hostile armies, each of which would advance when he turned upon the other, and retreat when he turned against itself, until he was worn out by this fruitless oscillation between two elusive enemies. Frederic had early predicted Daun's movement on Zittau, and had expected the adoption of tactics such as these. "I hope," he wrote, "to defeat either the Russians or the Austrians, whichever party gives me the first chance."¹ But instead of deciding promptly when every hour was precious, Daun remained six days at Görlitz undecided. He sent out detachments in one direction and another, which levied contributions on Prussian subjects, while Loudon captured the little walled town of Peitz in the circle of Cottbus with its handful of invalids. And he corresponded industriously with Vienna.

Finally both Daun and the empress-queen came to the conclusion, and at the same time, that the road to Dresden was the road to glory.² The next move accordingly was to Bautzen, in the neighborhood of which several more days were passed and more correspondence was had, alike with the empress-queen and with the commander of the army of the Empire. Daun's plan was to cross the Elbe at Meissen below Dresden, and fall upon Prince Henry in the rear, while Zweibrücken attacked him in the front. Foreseeing such a move, the prince reluctantly gave up his position about Pirna, and in the night of the thirty-first of August fell back to a

¹ To Prince Henry 28 July 1758, while he was still in Bohemia. Tempelhof thinks the common cause would have been better served by Fermor if he had not risked a battle, since the loss of it gave Frederic a chance to thwart Daun's whole plan; I. 235.

² Arneth, V. 404. Deference toward France, who through her ministers and ambassadors had never ceased to urge that the release of Saxony, not the reconquest of Silesia, ought to be the first object, may have had something to do with this decision. Cf. Stühr, II. 1, 5, etc.

new one nearer Dresden. This delicate movement in the face of a stronger army was effected with the utmost precision, and without the loss of a man. The new line stretched from the heights of Gahmig as a centre to the Elbe on the left and to the battlefield of Kesselsdorf on the right;¹ and in addition to its strength as against Zweibrücken, it had the further advantage that the Prussians could not now be cut off from Dresden by Daun. Pirna, of course, was sacrificed, and with it the Sonnenstein. The army of the Empire, leisurely advancing, stretched itself out along the site of the historic camp of the Saxons in 1756. And then another pause ensued. "I have now to confine myself," wrote the resolute prince, "to defending Dresden and to maintaining myself with honor against two armies, either of which alone is strong enough to require all my efforts."² But the discord and procrastination of his enemies gave him relief. Daun had advanced as far as Radeberg, and had his bridges ready to throw over the river, when he received word that Zweibrücken would not take the part assigned to him in the plan, and preferred a combined movement against Dresden from above and on both sides of the river. To the great disgust of Maria Theresa the field-marshal yielded.³ He moved his army by Radeberg to Stolpen directly east of Dresden, and not far from Pirna, the headquarters of Zweibrücken. Prince Henry shifted some of his troops about to meet this new situation.

It is needless to say that the time thus wasted by Daun was a precious gain for Frederic. In pursuit or rather observation of the Russians he had advanced as far as Blumberg, and wrote on the first of September that he hoped to push them beyond Landsberg by the sixth, when he would set out for Saxony.⁴ But the next day, in consequence of an urgent letter of Prince Henry, he decided to start at once. Leaving some sixteen thousand men under Dohna to keep watch of Fermor, the king returned with the rest to Cüstrin, and thence hastened by almost incredible marches toward the new point of danger. His course lay directly southward through Lausitz to the Elbe above Dresden. On the ninth he was at Grossenhain, where the roads from Bautzen, Torgau and Dresden intersect, and the same day pushed forward to Gross-Dobritz, only a dozen miles from the

¹ Tempelhof, II. 252.

² To Frederic, 2 September 1758.

³ The reason assigned in the text for Daun's change of plan is the one which he himself gave to Mortazel, the French military plenipotentiary (cf. Stühr, II. 22, 27) and is the one which Arneth adopts. But Stainville represents the marshal as reporting to Vienna that the approach of Frederic was the motive. Stühr, II. 23. Daun could have had no news of the king's plans on the third of September, but he might have had news of the battle of Zorndorf, and drawn conclusions.

⁴ *Pol. Cor.*, XVII. 204.

capital. Here, at last, while awaiting the enemy's next move, he could give his men a little rest. And here he was finally joined by the margrave Charles, with the troops left behind in Silesia just a month before, a reinforcement indispensable to his further plans, but long delayed by the exasperatingly slow movements of the margrave. Zieten also came, and later Marshal Keith. Although he had to detach five thousand men toward Berlin on account of the sudden approach of the Swedes, and cried out with bitter humor that his foot-soldiers were fast becoming mere postillions,¹ Frederic was now strong enough to feel confident of the issue if he could only get a fair battle. But this was the old problem. It was the same old problem because the king had before him the same cool, wary, cautious general, a general without ambition or enthusiasm, content to forego the personal renown which comes from dash, energy and enterprise, while he served his mistress in his own obstinate manner. Daun had no intention of giving up his position at Stolpen to please Frederic or to show his courage. He called in Loudon from Görlitz, and constructed an impenetrable abatis in front of his camp. In this secure shelter Daun sat a whole month, indifferent to all the manœuvres and challenges of Frederic, to the impatience of the empress-queen, to the appeals and exhortations which reached him from the camps of the allied armies. The great advantage of this unheroic policy was that it permitted Generals Harsch and Deville to prosecute the siege of Neisse without interference from Frederic.

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¹ Frederic to Prince Henry, 14 September 1758.